

Counseling Skills

Indiana Department of Workforce Development
ACC Webinar



Introduction

- Key Concepts
- ACC Core Competencies
- Counseling Foundations
 - Understanding Our Customers
 - Attribution Theory
 - Strength-Based Philosophy/Engagement
 - Professional Boundaries
- Counseling Skills
 - Active Listening
 - Constructive Confrontation



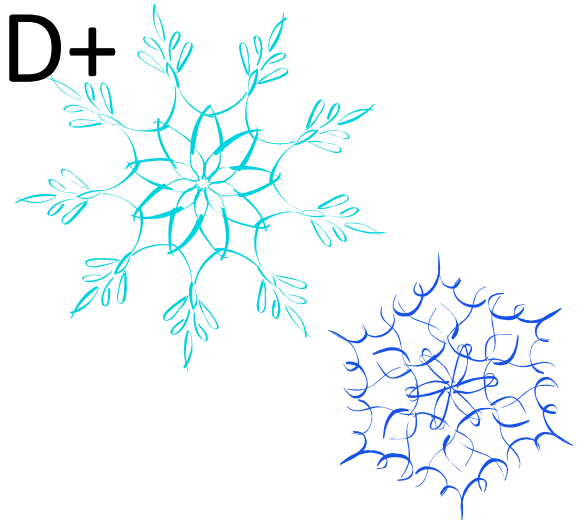
Academic and Career Counseling

Counseling Foundations and Skills are the tools that Academic and Career Counselors need to properly implement theories.



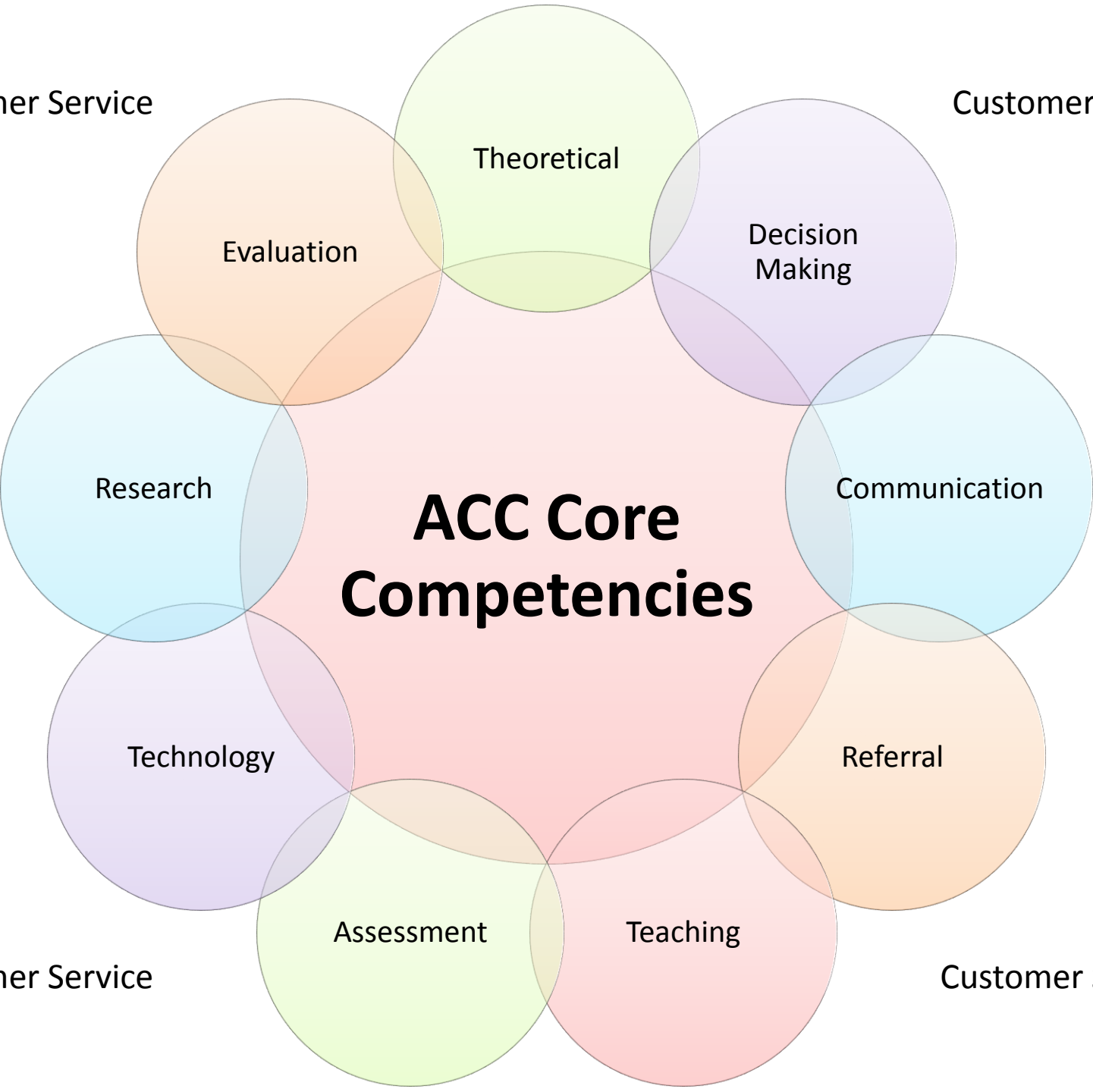
Key Concepts

- ❑ Career Minded Goals
- ❑ Right Fit/Right Placement
- ❑ High School Diploma/GED+
- ❑ Individualized Services



Customer Service

Customer Service



Customer Service

Customer Service

Counseling Foundations

1. Understanding Our Customers
2. Attribution Theory
3. Strength-Based Philosophy and Empowerment
4. Engagement/Building Rapport
5. Professional Boundaries

1. Understanding Our Customers

Changing, upgrading,
establishing or resuming
careers



Need for career guidance
and additional education,
certifications or
qualifications to stay
competitive

2. Attribution Theory

- Explains how we interpret the causes of our own and other's behavior
- Reminds ACCs to avoid assumptions, stereotypes and first impression biases
- Encourages ACCs to explore how their own interests, values and abilities impact how they assess customer aspirations

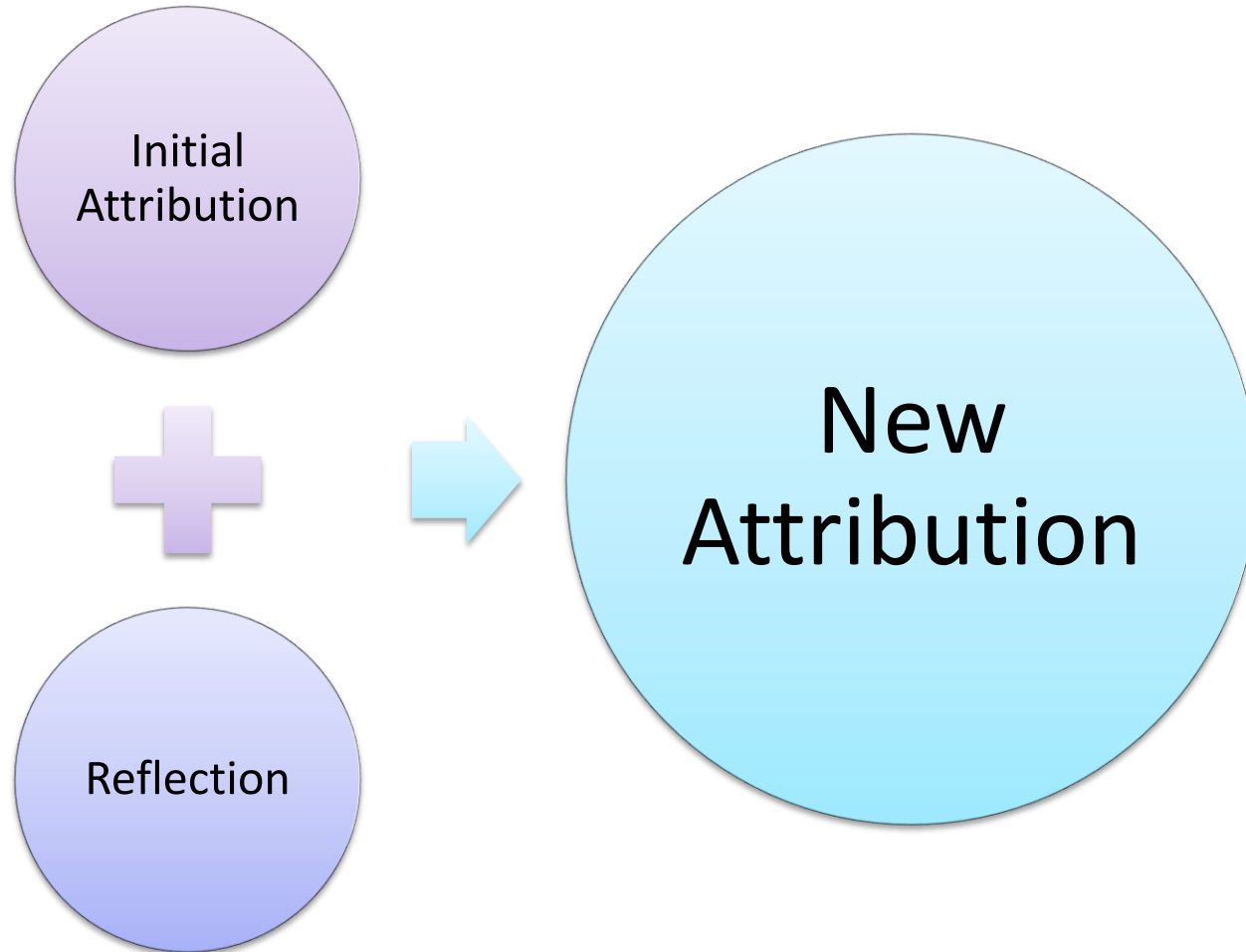
Fundamental Attribution Error

Natural tendency to:

- Overestimate the extent to which another person's behavior is due to *internal/dispositional* factors
- Underestimate the role of *external/situational* factors



Two-Step Process of Attribution



3. Engagement

Participation in cooperative, useful and reciprocal conversations that will open customers to positive change.



Attributes of Engagement

Trustworthiness

- All coaching and advising is rooted in factual information and not based on subjective opinion

Self-Awareness

- ACC should have conscious awareness of any prejudices, personal beliefs or assumptions that they bring to customer interactions

Empathetic Understanding and Acceptance

- ACCs must accept customer's perspectives as real and legitimate to them and make an effort to understand those perspectives and values when making educational and career plans

Non-Judgmental/ Non-Threatening

- ACCs must remain non judgmental in language, non-verbal cues and actions and should not overly stress negative consequences to gain compliance

Instilling Hope and Positive Mental Attitude

- Remain positive and focus on customer strengths and resources

4. Strength-Based Philosophy and Empowerment

Identification of strengths, skills, and goals

PLANNING AS PARTNERS—Development of solution-oriented plans focused on application of strengths

Uncover personal resources and encourage problem solving skills

Don't ignore limitations!

Increased motivation and ownership

Empowers customers to create unique solutions

5. Professional Boundaries

- Clearly established limits that allow an Academic and Career Counselor to make professional, ethical and safe connections with customers while developing collaborative partnerships
- Allow ACCs to focus on their responsibilities to customers, offering appropriate services that will effectively move customers toward reaching their occupational and educational goals

Professional Boundaries

Restrict access to
personal
information

Establish
professional
meeting space

Limit conversations
to relevant career
goals and needs

Frequently clarify
and reiterate
boundaries if
necessary

Counseling Skills

1. Active Listening
 - Questioning
 - Reflections
 - Continuation Responses
 - Providing Expert Opinions
2. Constructive Confrontation

1. Active Listening

Essential skill in building collaborative partnerships

Way of interacting with another person that ensures mutual understanding

Requires listener to deliberately focus and be receptive to a customer's message

Actively receiving words, feelings and experiences

Listener seeks to understand, interpret and evaluate information

Active Listening Techniques

Questioning

Reflection
Statements

Continuation
Responses

Expert
Opinions

Questioning



Gain
information

Explore
challenges

Support
customer's
self-
reflection

Discover
customer
goals

Facilitate the
development
of essential
problem
solving skills

Questioning

Close-Ended Questions

- Used to verify or clarify information
- Require one-word answer
- Must be used carefully as they can inhibit communication

Open-Ended Questions

- Encourage broader responses
- Help establish needs, feelings and opinions
- Used to clarify issues, identify problems and lead customer to self-exploration

Academic and Career Counseling sessions should include both open and closed-ended questions to obtain information and allow customers to fully explore their situation

Questioning Examples

Closed-Ended Questions	Open-Ended Questions
Do you plan to be working in 5 years? Do you plan on having the same career in 5 years?	What are some of your long term goals? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What do you plan on doing in 5 years?
Do you like the welding training program?	Can you tell me more about how the training program is going?
Did you like doing that kind of work?	Can you tell me about a specific aspect of your previous job that you particularly liked? What about that job did you dislike?

Limit the use of “Why?”

- Tends to elicit a defensive response and close lines of communication
- Perceived as accusatory which serves to disengage a customer and breakdown the relationship
- It is more effective to reword the question or develop another way to ask the question to obtain the needed information



Reflection Statements

Focus on the cognitive or emotional content of a customer's statement

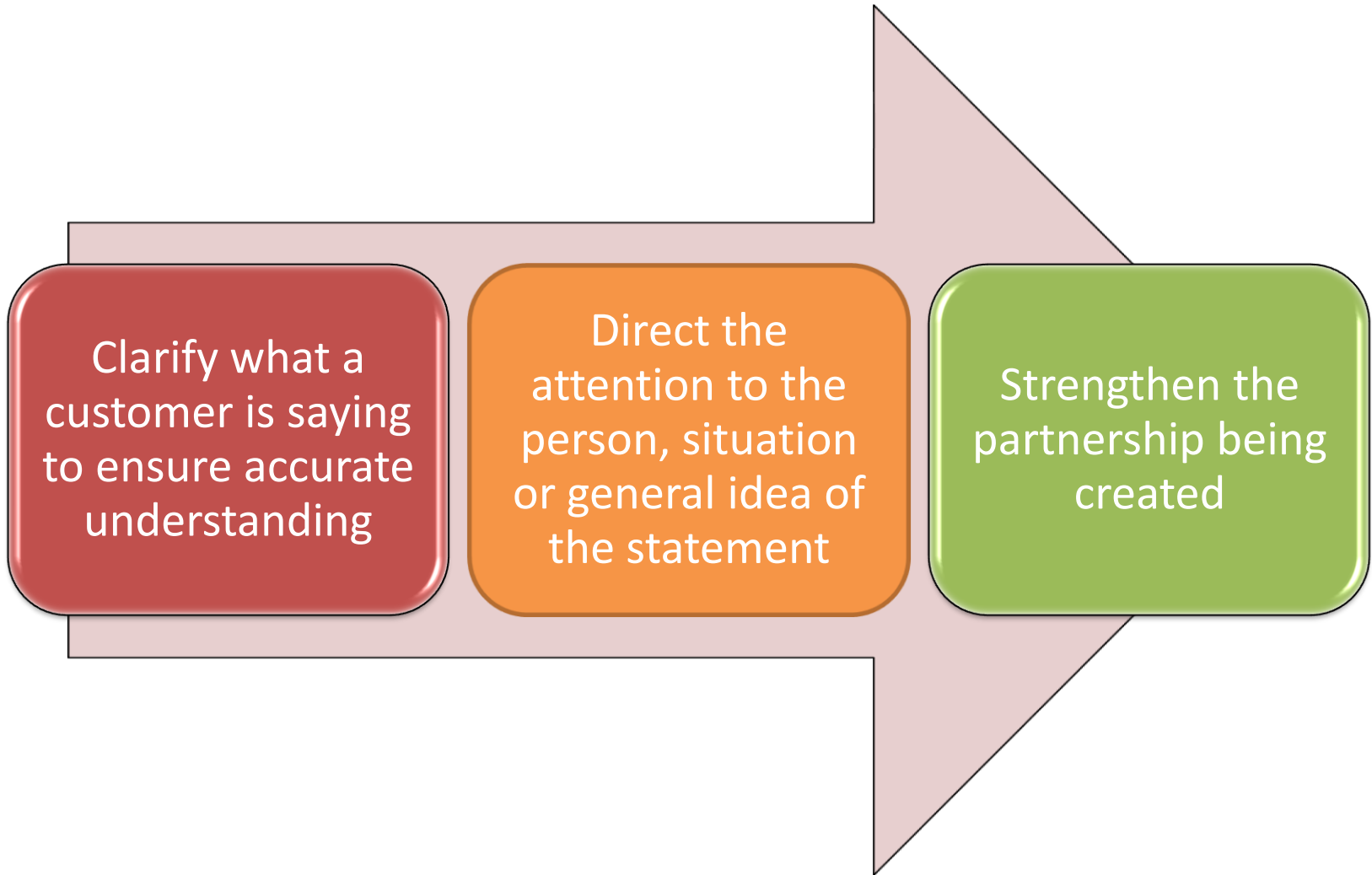


Mirroring

Paraphrasing

Feeling
Reflections

Reflection Statements



Reflection Statements

Mirroring	Paraphrasing	Feeling Reflections
✓ Repeating what the customer said word-for-word (a verbal head-nod)	✓ Clarifying and condensing large amounts of information or focusing on a specific aspect	✓ Demonstrating empathy by referencing the customers' emotion
✓ Acknowledges you heard the customer	✓ Acknowledge you heard the main point of what is being communicated	✓ Acknowledge and recognize the emotional impact of a situation
✓ Useful when customers are giving short answers or are saying little	✓ Useful when customers are over-sharing information or getting off-topic	✓ Useful when a customer is conveying a strong emotion

Using Reflection Statements- Example

“I’m thinking about going back to school but I have no idea where to start. It just feels like the process is so confusing and complicated.”

MIRRORING

- You are thinking about going back to school but have no idea where to start because the process is confusing and complicated. <Open-ended question: Can you tell me a little about what steps you have taken so far?>

PARAPHRASING

- So it sounds like you have been thinking about going back to school but have stalled in the process because you find the process confusing. <Open-ended question: What aspects have you found particularly confusing? >

FEELING REFLECTION

- So, you have been considering returning to school but have felt frustrated about the process? Is this how you felt? <Open-ended question: What do you think are some steps we can do together to simplify the process and make it more manageable?>

Benefits of Using Reflection Statements

- ✓ Allows customers to clarify any miscommunication or misunderstanding
- ✓ Combining reflection statements with open-ended questions engages customer to fully explore their situation
- ✓ Self-evaluation leads to clear goals and action steps, increased motivation and more consistent follow through

Continuation Responses

- Encourage customers to continue speaking or elaborating about a specific subject and guide a conversation to obtain a complete picture
- Can be verbal (“Go on...” “Please tell me more..”) or non verbal (nodding or using hand movements)
- Promote customers’ self exploration, leading to a deeper understanding of their goals, values, current circumstances or action steps needed



Expert Opinions



- Giving information and facts rather than opinions should be standard practice
- Information shared with customers must be strongly rooted in fact, up-to-date, accurate and clear
- Biased information can be destructive and confusing to the customer

Providing Expert Opinion-Example

Tony is a customer very interested in attending a Carpenter's Apprenticeship program. The program recommends participants have at least a 11th grade math level on their TABE assessment. Tony scored only a 9th grade math level. He graduated high school 25 years ago and has mentioned he never really liked school and found it difficult.

Subjective Opinion

- One of my customers tried that Carpentry Apprenticeship program a few years ago. He said it was really hard. He also said that they don't really help you very much if you can't do the work. He wasn't too happy with his experience and is working in a different field now. Let's think about some other jobs you might be interested in.

Expert Opinion

- It's great that you are interested and took the steps needed to find out about the apprenticeship program. 98% of people who completed this program scored at an 11th grade or higher on their TABE. I believe that it will be to your advantage to try and bring your math TABE assessment score up to at least an 11th grade level. We have a few options to do this...

Difficult Conversations and Expert Opinions

- ✓ Difficult conversations are often avoided because Counselors are unsure of what to say or they are afraid of scaring the customer away from seeking assistance.
- ✓ It is important to address difficult topics, such as when a customer's goal or career pathway is unrealistic for their current circumstances, education level, or previous experience.

2. Constructive Confrontation

- Strategy for promoting positive behavioral change
- Deliberate intervention and active process
- Vital part of being a change agent and motivating customer to recognize the reasons to initiate or follow through with positive changes

Constructive Confrontation can address:

Behaviors or attitudes that may be creating barriers for customers setting realistic goals

Problems that have remained unsolved

Differences between ACCs and the customer that are impeding working productively together

Actions that seem inappropriate or damaging

Unrealistic expectations, goals or timeframes

Constructive Confrontation



- ✓ Established relationship.
- ✓ Over-kindness and over-toughness both harm the customer.
- ✓ Be aware some time may be required for customer to accept the message.
- ✓ Maintain professional distance/professional boundaries.
- ✓ Remember customer's feelings should be the focus.
- ✓ Provide encouragement, support and access to resources for customers to meet the challenge.

Effective Confrontation Techniques

- “We see things differently. What I see is ____.”
- “You believe _____. On the other hand, I believe _____. The difference is _____.”
- “I disagree. Your position is _____. Mine is _____.”
- “On one hand, you’re saying _____, but on the other hand you seem to be acting/saying/feeling _____.”

Using Constructive Confrontation

Customer states that he is diligently looking for employment, yet every time you see him, he is using the internet to shop online.

TOO HARSH

You'll never find a job wasting time on the internet!



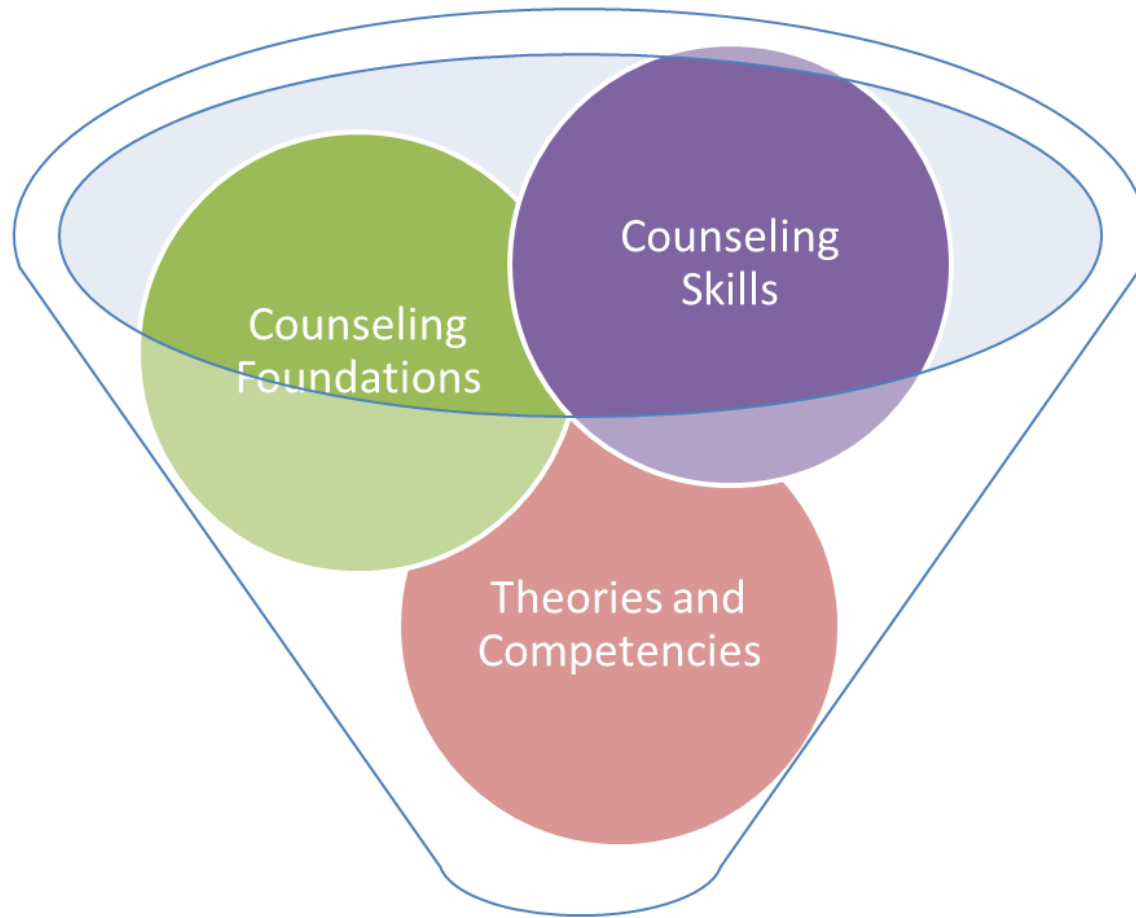
TOO SOFT

Don't worry. Something should eventually come through and you'll find a job.



CONSTRUCTIVE CONFRONTATION

On one hand you're saying that you really want to get a job, but on the other hand, I have noticed that you have been spending a lot of time at the Center online shopping. Let's talk about some steps that will make you more successful in your job search....



**Academic and Career
Counseling**

Questions



Training Reference, Reflections and Exercises

Key Training Concepts and ACC Core Competencies	Academic and Career Counseling Manual- <i>Academic and Career Counseling :Principles and Theories</i> Pages 3-8
Counseling Foundations	Academic and Career Counseling Manual- <i>Counseling Skills</i> Pages 35-56
Counseling Skills	Academic and Career Counseling Manual- <i>Counseling Skills</i> Pages 56-79
Active Listening (Questioning, Reflections, Continuation Responses, Providing Expert Opinions)	Academic and Career Counseling Manual- <i>Counseling Skills</i> Pages 56-70
Constructive Confrontation	Academic and Career Counseling Manual- <i>Counseling Skills</i> Pages 70-74
Online Materials	http://in.gov/dwd/WorkOneProfessionalDevelopment.html